DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 273 018 EA 018 752

AUTHOR Worth, Charles E.; Worth, Maria M.
TITLE Staff Development Update by School Administrators.
PUB DATE Mar 86
NOTE 12p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (San Francisco, CA, March 1-4, 1986).
PUB TYPE Guides - Non-Classroom Use (055) -- Information Analyses (070) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS Administrators; Educational Administration; Elementary Secondary Education; *Inservice Education; *Management Development; Models; Program Development

ABSTRACT

To provide an understanding of the issues and essential elements involved in developing effective inservice programs for administrators, information from research on teacher inservice programs was adapted in light of the insights of several administrators attending the 1986 national conference of the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development. These issues and elements and a model for effective inservice programs are presented in this paper. The central issues identified focused on (1) improving administrative inservice programs through shared effort, increased research, and a more professional attitude; (2) covering topics relevant to administrators, such as instructional leadership and the management of time and resources; and (3) providing for ways to cope with the expectations and demands of others. Twelve strategies for improving inservice programs include (1) making training specific, (2) obtaining staff input, (3) urging commitment to change, (4) developing useful materials, (5) combining local and imported expertise, (6) observing others' practices, (7) using feedback, (8) individualizing programs, (9) using trainees as trainers, (10) meeting personal goals, (11) involving administrators at all levels, and (12) finding appropriate incentives. The inservice training model suggested emphasizes clearly defined goals, specified roles, observation of other programs, strategies for commitment and participation, and followup support. (PGD)

**********
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
**********

ED273018

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☒ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL IN MICROFICHE ONLY HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Charles E. Worth

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

# STAFF DEVELOPMENT UPDATE BY SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS

Charles E. Worth

Maria M. Worth

Western New Mexico University
Dept. of Education & Psychology
Silver City, NM

Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, held in San Francisco, California, from March 1-4, 1986.

EA 018 752

Staff Development Update by School Administrators

Introduction

This article focuses upon issues regarding administrator inservice. Effective inservice appears to be an increasingly addressed goal in public school settings. As long a time span as inservice training has had in most locations to become refined in scope and sequence, one might incorrectly make the assumption that an evolution of experience has generally produced significant, organized and well disseminated programs. An ERIC search of the subject reveals a paucity of information much beyond a linear array of specific inservice program reports. Little has been researched for quality control strategies, systemmatic planning for handling logistics which help replicate and build upon good inservice programming, or shared problem solving between districts to preclude rediscovering the inservice wheel throughout school systems in the country. An even scarcer body of information exits with respect to inservice programs for administrators.

This article, therefore, represents a compilation of information from adaptation of research regarding teacher inservice and an exchange of ideas conducted in an administrator's session of the 1986 national conference of the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development. The presentation was refreshingly different, as a group participation session was held to discuss new issues of inservice planning and delivery among a group of directors of instruction, assistant superintendents and superintendents from California to Rhode Island. A constructive concensus quickly grew in the group, as similar needs and problems emerged. These issues will be addressed and organized into some strategies for adopting a district-wide inservice model, boosting inservice consumer skills, and logistics of providing generic and specialized training to school administrators.

Issues Regarding Administrator Inservice

The first step in the A.S.C.D. session was to involve the audience in a discussion designed to identify common issues with respect to inservice training in general and specifics of applications for administrators. Perhaps no group of educators focuses more poignantly upon bottom line, how-do-I-translate-this-theory-into-practice as do administrators seeking and sharing issues for their own inservice development. Both central office and building administrators reported that participatory planning of inservice by teachers yielded a plethora of needs and issues which are difficult to organize into broader, applicable inservice for targeted teacher groups. A similar finding among administrators was discovered. Moreover, the general concensus was that administrator planning of inservice as a shared responsibility among all levels of administration would yield better received training programs than inputs planned and/or implemented by the specific administrators, themselves.

This issue of shared responsibility when developing a model for inservice training is an important one, especially when applied to administrator training. In a random, statewide survey of approximately one-third of all New Mexico school administrators, one significant finding reflected the need for on-going, in-depth research regarding current practices and perceived needs with respect to inservice for all educators. Moreover, the need for greater design and planning of administrative inservice sessions was found (Worth, 1986). In the A.S.C.D. session, there was a universally agreed upon reality that inservice for administrators is largely a myth, and staff development for building and central office administrators is usually on-the-job-training and agenda meetings held with the chief executive officer. Because a strong movement exists across the country to identify and implement teacher and administrator competencies, the

predictable rise in interest among administrators for their own training poses a dilemma. Accountability criteria focus heavily upon instructional leadership while the majority of administrators necessarily deal with more demanding priorities on a day to day, minute to minute basis. Parent complaints, students fighting, bus routes, state reports, board member zealousness in policy execution and skinned knees all have a way of disrupting instructional leadership on a regular, often overwhelming basis. There was a unilateral agreement among the participating administrators at the conference session that they would love the opportunity to be able to spend more time and effort with instructional endeavors. A lack of resources and time is cited as the major impediments to attaining the idealistic goals of greater instructional leadership. Moreover, A real concern was held, that these uncontrollable limitations might be perceived as unmet responsibilities when administrators are evaluated with ideal criteria which may often be impractical in a daily sense. One simple fact seems prevalent among lay people. Almost everyone considers themselves an expert on what should be occurring in our schools, because almost everyone spent some years there and has ideas on what ideals should be realities.

The conclusion which one can draw from the issues posed with respect to administrator inservice training is the existing need and the growing need for districts to invest time and resources in such inservice programs. Because there is a scarcity of resources and time, because we will continue to be the focus of attention to all educational ills in a community, and because we share common problems and solutions, a strong case can be made for the highest levels of decisioning in a school organization to support and become actively involved in the shared responsibility of inservice training.

Ingredients of Effective Administrative Inservice

The second step in the A.S.C.D. session was to identify agreed upon components for effective inservice which should apply to generically given session topics for educators. Though overtly guided by the session leaders from content found in the literature, agreement and some refinement of twelve ingredients for effective inservice were acknowledged as valuable for school administrators specifically, and most educational personnel, generally. The following twelve how-to statements regarding effective inservice programs are found as a compilation of a review of the literature (Worth, 1986). Not intended to be exhaustive, these statements represent strategies which should improve the quality of and impact on inservice programs for administrators.

1. Training should be specific, concrete and on-going. There seems to be unilateral agreement in the literature and among practicing educators that while individually dynamic trainers can be effective, a sustained program based upon identified skill and information needs of administrators is the most workable approach to upgrading skills.

2. Staff support strategies, such as pre/post planning meetings augment the effectiveness of inservice training. There is an important balance between administrators having ownership in the inservice training and the need for administrative decisioning regarding specific training to de delivered. It was strongly agreed in the A.S.C.D. session that while we may be well in touch with their own inservice needs, we do not necessarily have the most viable insights into what other administrators need.

3. Changes in attitudes and motivation are primary goals that accompany knowledge and skill training. The desired consequences of any instructional inservice is gained by a commitment for the change, an understanding and agreement for that change, and a familiarity with how that change can be implemented. Personal bias can be a strong motivator or inhibitor.

4. Materials development in inservice programs is an important component. If acquisition is to occur so that new administrative behaviors occur, personally developed and useful materials are beneficial resources.

5. Use a combination of local district talent and imported expertise to augment inservice programs. Exemplary techniques and new issues need to be adoptable locally, and administrators who have the opportunity to work with others to share their experiences and expertise have a way of effectively promoting adoption of technique.

6. Observation and demonstration of activities in other schools or districts are helpful for administrators to incorporate inservice ideas. Since common issues in education emerge from many outside influences on local community and school needs, sharing in the planning and delivery of training and training follow-up activities can significantly boost adoption of desired training goals.

7. Trials with feedback help skill refinement, especially if there is no condition of jeopardy associated with trying and acquiring new skills. This strategy is important in the inservice training as well as with follow-up activities to boost adoption of techniques. This ingredient also fits in with the overall approach of incorporating definite and well-planned specifics for educators and minimizing theory, lecture and other passive forms of training.

8. Individualized strategies are most effective for inservice goal attainment. Self-paced activities for administrators, along with a menu of activities to select, can help to tailor a more unique set of successful experiences for each. This is especially true when plenary sessions are augmented by smaller group and follow-up activities.

9. Use inservice trainees as helpers and planners in succeeding programs. A second benefit of inservice training can occur as a follow-up activity in using trained administrators to train others. This reinforces the skills learned by the trainees and offers low cost assists in future, on-going inservice.

10. The personal goals of administrators must coincide with district goals. Inservice is a shared effort and requires collaboration with those who are being trained. Personal politics, levels of commitment and expectations all need to be considered if training progress is to occur over time.

11. All levels of administrative involvement is an important factor for success. The building principal who sets up a program and leaves is just as removed from the faculty as the school board members or superintendent who do not attend administrative inservice.

12. Appropriate incentives are directly related to improvement. While it is true that quality inservice programs provide some real incentive for participating in a training session, perceived importance is enhanced by release time, recognition, cost stipends and other tangible incentives which show participants that people value the training and expect significant levels of participation.

A Model for Inservice Training for Administrators

There seems to be strong congruence of perceived benefit with respect to each of the twelve components of inservice training for both teachers and administrators, though the following inservice model, which includes the twelve essential components, is restricted to important facets of planning strategies for administrators.

The first component for any concerted inservice program in a public school setting should be clearly defined school and district goals. These

need to be outlined in board policy and understood by administrators in the central office or in their individual schools. Often, outside consultants assist districts with inservice delivery. Districts might consider using consultants to work with their administrative personnel in developing and implementing district inservice policies and viable goals for board approval. Once this process is complete, administrators can be surveyed to determine their specific inservice needs relative to a district goal approach.

By allowing administrators to participate in the planning and arranging of their own inservice sessions, the chances of arranging training that is geared to their developmental needs increase. In the process of surveying administrators concerning their inservice needs, it could be helpful if they specified areas in which they have expertise and might be of assistance to others. This allows peer instruction to focus on individualized needs which many administrators feel the need for some assistance with. These initial steps help ensure that the all inservice programs are concrete and job related, as both individual and group goals and needs are planned for and addressed.

Included in the district policy for inservice should be the description of involvement by top level personnel which is needed in the actual training to help accomodate the transfer and acceptance of new skills by participants. Supervisors should attend the inservice training sessions with subordinates, because this promotes a commonality of information and fosters a basis for further communication and discussion to achieve responsible and lasting changes throughout the district. Central office personnel should budget their time and resources to attend training sessions with their assistants and building principals. Board of Education members should be strongly encouraged as a standard practice to attend training with their central

office personnel. In addition, unrealistic expectations throughout the district with respect to goals, evaluation criteria, time commitments, etc. become more fully revealed via this process and can be more appreciated and reasonably dealt with by all members of the school district.

During the training, demonstrations of new techniques and modeling of new behaviors enhances the liklihood of the training being carried beyond the actual sessions into operational changes. Proactive, skill refining types of inservice programs have consistently been preferred to lecture and to theory (Bierly & Berliner, 1982). One important facet of this hands on approach is materials development. When participants can leave a session with useful materials which they have some ownership in developing and using, direct involvement and concrete training have been enhanced.

A third ingredient in useful inservice models are observations and visitations of other programs, as the inservice training progresses. When similar or identical programs are compared and shared, a strong reinforcer to learning can occur. Often, as participants move through any given training series, individuals will seek reassurance. This verification of tried-and-true experience as well as embracing new approaches is an important element for a person in order to try, adopt or refine targeted skills. Seeing a successful model, especially in an area that has been identified as important for improvement, is a powerful, motivating factor. A related practice which elevates the acceptance of training is to hold the inservice sessions in a school. It is often easier to visualize the effects of skills development program or an evaluation system when the participants are in the surroundings where new training will be affect as the ultimate impact.

While visits are motivational, an especially crucial component to any inservice model is a planned exercise for administrators to examine and

analyze their attitudes and predispositions towards the needs and activities being addressed in the training. Too often there is an incorrect assumption that if it is needed, it is generally supported and people are ready to try to gain that skill targeted for inservice. It has been the authors' experience that every administrator's inservice session should have a major goal of winning personal commitment for the objectives and techniques to be covered. This goal should be won early in the training series, must be approached with neutral values on the part of the trainer, and needs to be won before real commitment for the substance of the inservice will be readily adopted. Working with administrators to become more supportive of handicapped students in regular classroom settings is a good example. Real progress in this area is sure to be stymied if negative attitudes are not openly examined, dealt with and resolved on the part of the participants. It may be that winning this change in attitude is a significant goal for a total inservice program among targeted participants.

Inservice programs, therefore, should include as a major component in the training, a sequence of audience participation which includes an encouraged expression of opinions and other activities designed to win openness and positive commitment by all the participants. This is especially true with administrators who need a clear idea of their role in the change process and how their attitudes affect those of their subordinates. These training sessions become more meangingful with a greater and more productive carryover into their daily activities, and carryover necessarily begins with a commitment.

Finally, there is the need for support after the actual training is completed. It appears necessary, although not sufficient, to merely plan and to develop strategies to implement a sequence of training sessions. As

teachers and administrators implement new program components, questions and problems arise. It appears beneficial for peers to meet together to compare ideas and to help each other set solutions. This step in the inservice model may be the one which ensures the successful adoption of new, desired skills. Wiser inservice consumerism, for example, can be generated in training follow ups to streamline and revise inservice goals and needs and to pinpoint new priorities which arise after one training session has concluded.

Conclusion

The components of this model are consistent with each of the twelve inservice practices recommended as valuable in the inservice literature and supported by the discussion generated during the A.S.C.D. session. It includes ingredients for an inservice training sequence which fits district needs for administrators. It stresses the prime importance of improving perceptions, attitudes and skills which need to become part of an educator's repertoire. Lastly, the model is designed to continually evolve as a self-improving system within the greater educational system so that any issue might be included and effectively attended to by helping those responsible for education to themselves participate in better inservice education.

References

Bierly, Margaret M., & Berliner, David C. (1982). The elementary school teacher as learner. Journal of Teacher Education, 33 (6), 37-40.

Worth, Maria M. (1986). Educator inservice practices as perceived by public school administrators in new mexico. Doctoral Dissertation at New Mexico State University, Las Cruces, New Mexico.